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IDENTITIES RELEASED OF 18 MONTECITO MUDSLIDE VICTIMS

Identities Released of 18 Montecito Mudslide Victims

NEWS REPORT / JAN 12 2018 11:29 PM / BYEDHAT STAFF / 17 COMMENTS / READS 99677

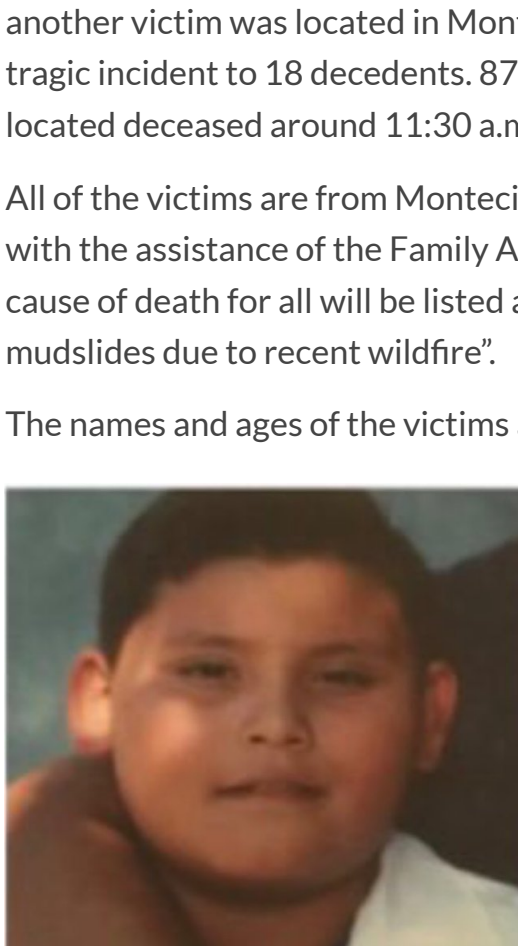
Update by Edhat Staff
6:00 p.m. January 12, 2018

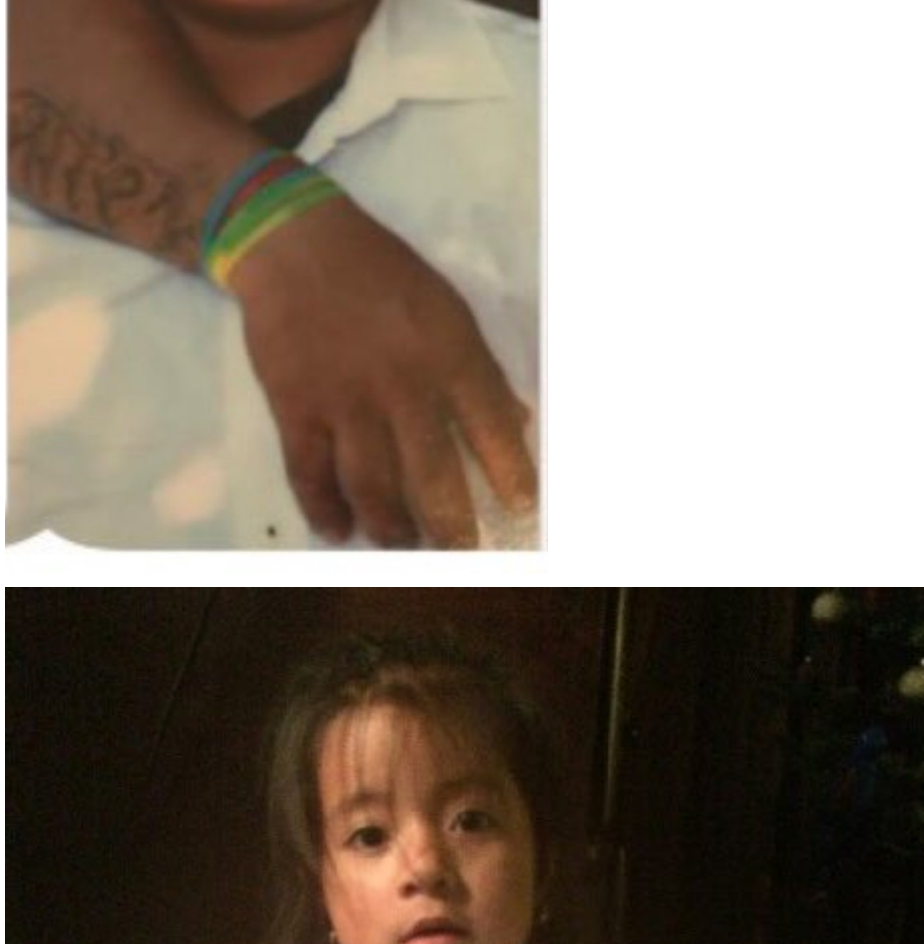
Authorities have released the names of 18 people who died in the Montecito mudslides, ranging from 3-years-old to 89-years-old.

On January 11, the Santa Barbara County Coroner's Office received 17 decedents directly related to the January 9 flood incident in the Montecito area. On January 12, another victim was located in Montecito bringing the total number of casualties from this tragic incident to 18 decedents. 87-year-old Joseph Francis Bleckel of Montecito was located deceased around 11:30 a.m. inside his Romero Canyon residence.

All of the victims are from Montecito and the next of kin have been notified of the deaths with the assistance of the Family Assistance Center and Coroner's Office personnel. The cause of death for all will be listed as "Multiple traumatic injuries due to flash flood with mudslides due to recent wildfire".

The names and ages of the victims are:

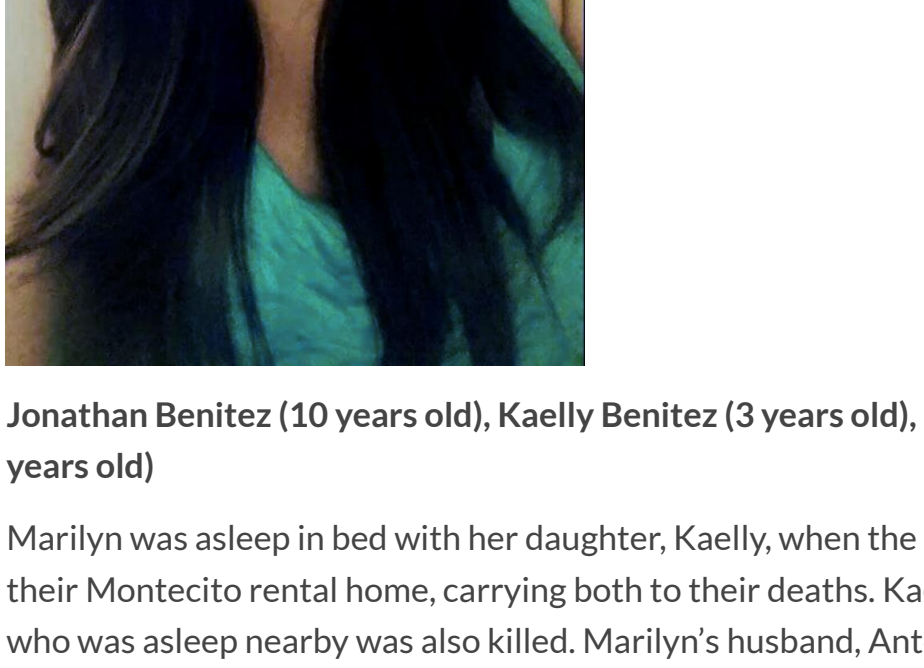




Jonathan Benitez (10 years old), Kaelly Benitez (3 years old), and Marilyn Ramos (27 years old)

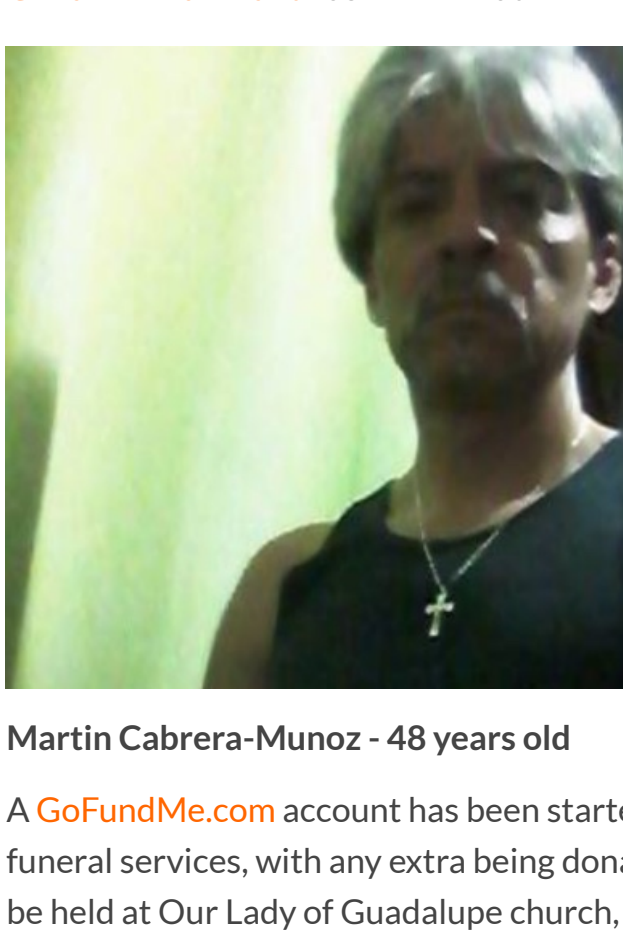
Marilyn was asleep in bed with her daughter, Kaelly, when the mudslide crashed through their Montecito rental home, carrying both to their deaths. Kaelly's cousin, Jonathan, who was asleep nearby was also killed. Marilyn's husband, Antonio Benitez, was injured, as was his brother, Victor, who is Jonathan's father. Victor's 2-year-old son survived, but his wife, Fabiola, was still missing as of Friday.

Jonathan was a fourth-grade student at Cleveland Elementary School in Santa Barbara. A GoFundMe account has been created for the family.



Martin Cabrera-Munoz - 48 years old

A GoFundMe.com account has been started by Martin's family to raise money for his funeral services, with any extra being donated to the American Red Cross. A rosary will be held at Our Lady of Guadalupe church, Tuesday (January 16) at 7 pm and mass will be Wednesday (January 17) at 10 am.



David Cantin - 49 years old

David was scoutmaster of Boy Scout Troop 33 and vice president of sales for NDS Surgical Imaging, a company that develops and sells operating room technology. His daughter Lauren, 14, was pulled from the wreckage of the family home early Wednesday, and his wife Kim was also rescued. The family's 17-year-old son Jack is still missing, as of Friday.

A GoFundMe account has been set up for the family.

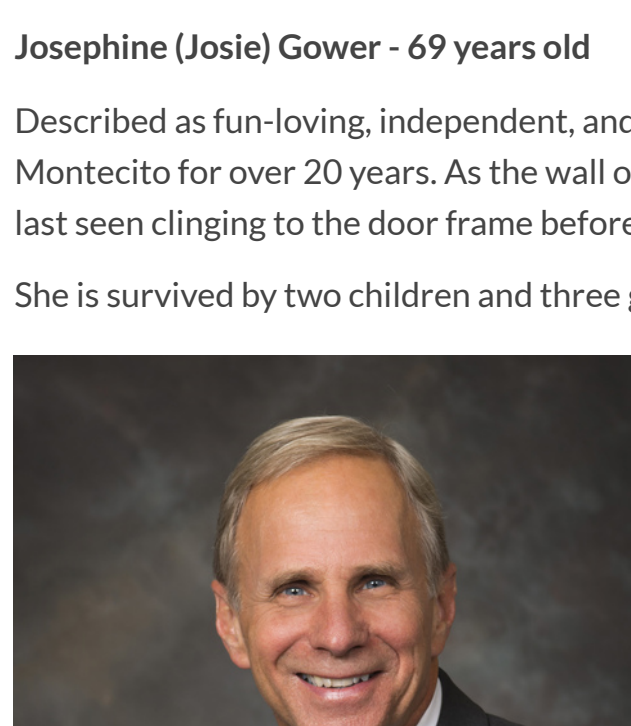
Sawyer Corey - 12 years old

Sawyer and her sister Morgan Corey, 25, were asleep in their Montecito home when the mud rolled through the area, sweeping away the home and the family members inside. Sawyer's twin sister, Summer, and their mother Carie Baker have been found and are recovering at the hospital. Morgan is still missing as of Friday.

Peter Fleurat - 73 years old (right)

Peter has been described as hilarious, silly, giving, and loved the outdoors. He was at home with his partner of 17 years, Ralph "Lalo" Barajas (left), when a wall of mud burst through their walls. "The last thing Peter yelled out to me was, 'Lalo, grab onto some wood and don't let go,'" Barajas told CBS News. "That was the last I heard of him." Barajas, the owner of the Rose Cafe on the Mesa, was rescued and released from the hospital when he received the news that Peter had died.

A GoFundMe has been set up for the family.

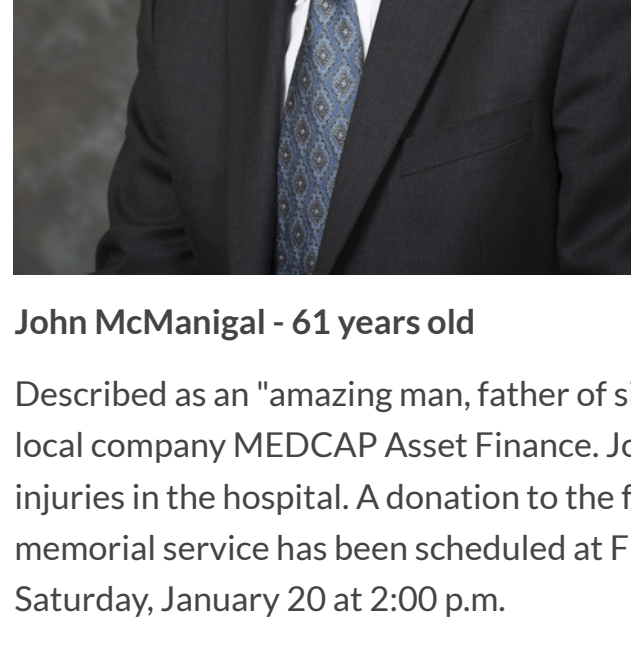


© Facebook

Josephine (Josie) Gower - 69 years old

Described as fun-loving, independent, and the life of the party, Josie had lived in Montecito for over 20 years. As the wall of mud and debris reached her home, Josie was last seen clinging to the door frame before the mudflow swept her away.

She is survived by two children and three grandchildren.

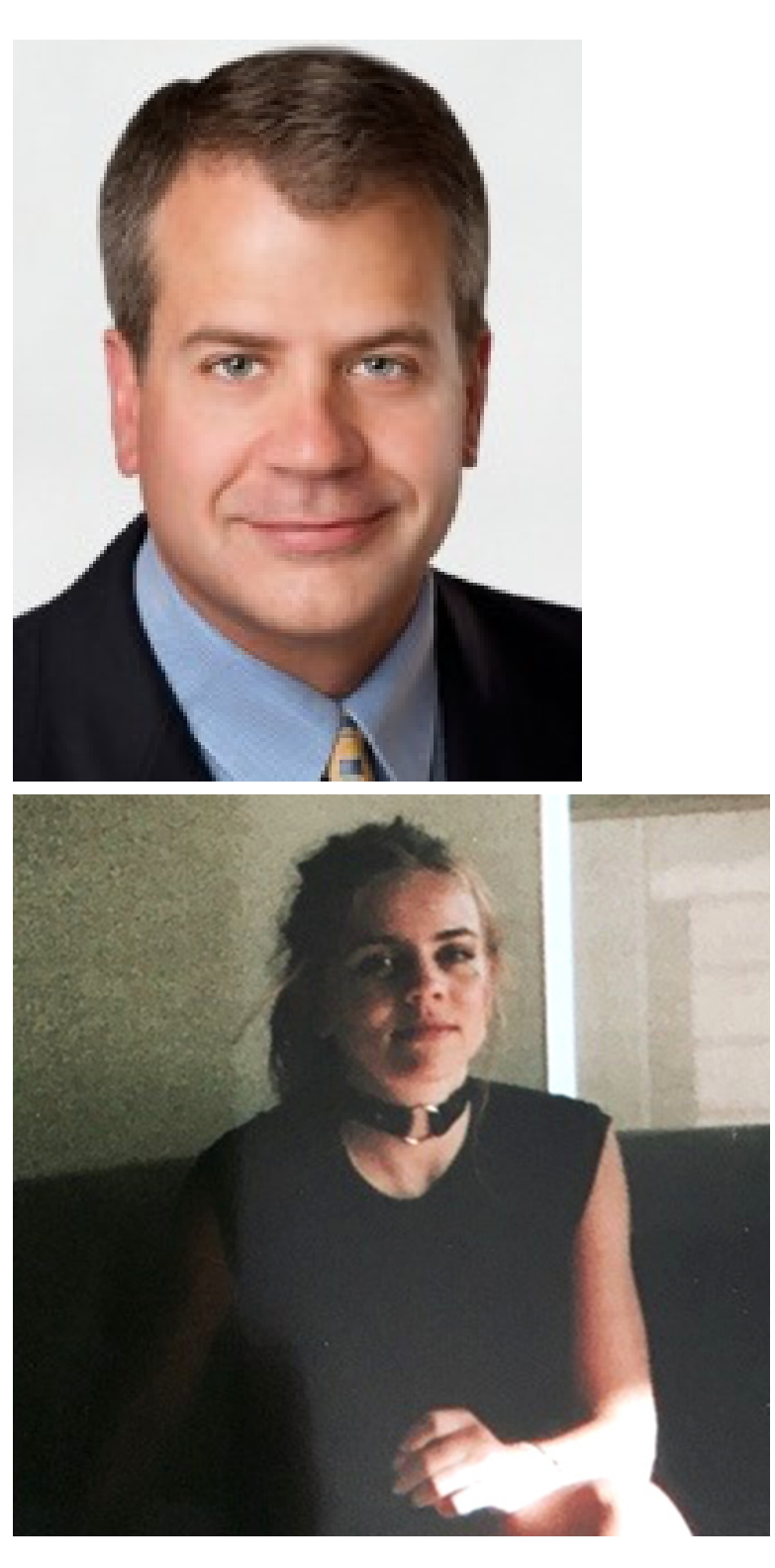


John McManigal - 61 years old

Described as an "amazing man, father of six, and loving husband", John is the owner of local company MEDCAP Asset Finance. John's son Connor is recovering from serious injuries in the hospital. A donation to the family can be made at gofundme.com. A memorial service has been scheduled at First Presbyterian Church of Santa Barbara on Saturday, January 20 at 2:00 p.m.

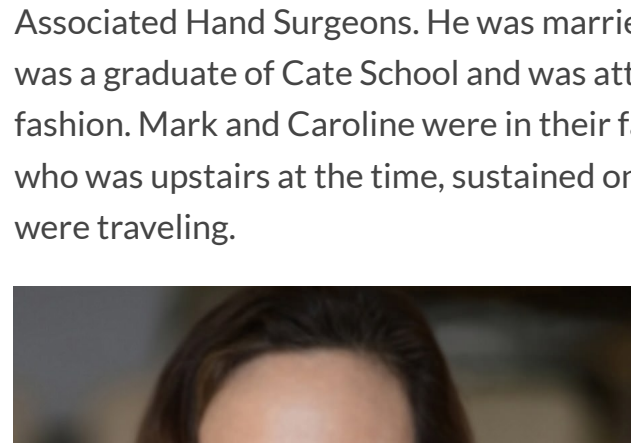
Alice (78 years old) and James "Jim" Mitchell (89 years old)

Alice and Jim moved to Montecito after retiring in 1995. Their Hot Springs Road home was named "Casa de Contenta," the house of contentment. The night before the storm, the couple chose to stay home and celebrate Jim's 89th birthday with a quiet dinner.



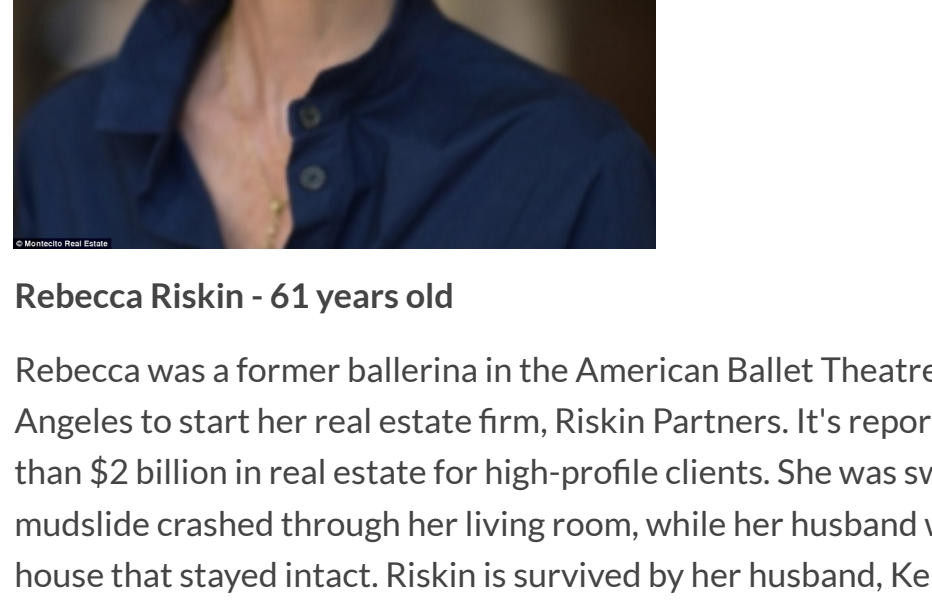
Mark (54 years old) and Caroline Montgomery (22 years old)

Dr. Mark Montgomery was a hand surgeon at Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital and Associated Hand Surgeons. He was married with three children. His daughter, Caroline, was a graduate of Cate School and was attending Barnard College pursuing a degree in fashion. Mark and Caroline were in their family home when the mud flow hit. Mark's son, who was upstairs at the time, sustained only minor injuries. His wife and eldest daughter were traveling.



Rebecca Riskin - 61 years old

Riskin was a former ballerina in the American Ballet Theatre before moving to Los Angeles to start her real estate firm, Riskin Partners. It's reported she brokered more than $2 billion in real estate for high-profile clients. She was swept away after the mudslide crashed through her living room, while her husband was in bed in a part of the house that stayed intact. Riskin is survived by her husband, Ken Grand, children Robert and Julia, and a grandson.



Roy Rohter - 84 years old

Roy, a retired real estate broker, founded St. Augustine Academy, a Catholic school in Ventura, in 1994. Him and his wife, Theresa, were found inside their Montecito home after the mudslide hit. Theresa was injured but survived.

Peerawat Sutthithepa (6 years old) and Richard Loring Taylor (79 years old)

Peerawat, affectionately known as Pasta, was at home with his step-grandfather Loring, his father, and 2-year-old sister when the mudslide hit their E. Valley Road home. His father and sister are still missing as of Friday, but his mother and grandmother were working when the mudslide hit and are safe.

A GoFundMe account has been created for the family by Pasta's father who worked at Toyota of Santa Barbara.

Joseph Francis Bleckel - 87 years old

Joseph was the latest victim announced on Friday. He was found inside his home on Winding Creek Lane in Romero Canyon.

MISSING

As of Friday, January 12, the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office reported 7 people are still missing. More details and photos of the missing people can be found here and here.

- Morgan Christine Corey – 25 years old
- John "Jack" Cantin – 17 years old
- Faviola Benitez Calderon – 28 years old
- Pinit Sutthithepa – 30 years old
- Lydia Sutthithepa – 2 years old
- Delbert Weltzin – 62 year old transient who often frequents the railroad tracks near Olive Mill.
- John "Jack" Keating – 53 year old transient who often frequents the Montecito riverbed area.

If there is any information on these missing people, please contact the Family Assistance Center at 21 E. Constance in Santa Barbara, or by calling 805-681-5542 and ask for the appropriate person.

You can mark yourself as "Safe" and search for others who have checked in as safe at the Red Cross' Online System.

FOUND SAFE AFTER BEING REPORTED MISSING

- Ken Liatas
- Dwight and Kimberly Lowell
- Scott McMillin
- Judy Stewart
- Arthur and Tracie Ownes

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17 COMMENTS

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TOM JACOBS JAN 12, 2018 01:41 PM

How do you find the missing persons list. Has anyone seen Frances Shannon & Hugh on Sycamore Canyon Rd?

A-1515851988 JAN 12, 2018 02:16 AM

Fire Chief put out correction 6PM Thursday which stated the number is 8 missing persons, not 43.

MTNDRIVER JAN 11, 2018 09:32 AM

If I lived close to Coast Village Rd. I'd probably think it was silly to evacuate. Just sayin'. Easy to judge people, but when you've been out of your house for two weeks in a fire, feeling fearful and uncertain, and just got home, finally settling back into what feels "normal", I can see how the idea of a mudslide coming over 2 miles from the canyons above could seem really unlikely, especially if you've never seen a flash flood in action before. And some of the areas hardest hit were in voluntary zones, not mandatory. Blaming victims is something people do to try to convince themselves that whatever it is--disease, accident, natural disaster--couldn't happen to them. Sorry blamers, but that just ain't the case. What's needed now is support, compassion, grieving, not pointing fingers.

SANDYINSB JAN 12, 2018 06:56 AM

Well Said!

I LIVE IN SB JAN 11, 2018 08:48 AM

According to a post on Facebook, Dwight and Kim Lowell are safe.

A-1515851988 JAN 11, 2018 06:16 AM

Judy Stewart found alive!! Confirmed by her sister on FaceBook.

MAVITA JAN 10, 2018 09:37 PM

Larry is alive. My friends uncle!

A-1515851988 JAN 10, 2018 05:22 PM

At least some good news: One of the posts above has been updated (by the original poster on facebook) that the Andersons are home and safe.

ROGER JAN 10, 2018 02:43 PM

I heard a rescue yesterday involving 5 people they got one and were removing bodies from the location today, I went for a walk in my travels I heard someone say "Will they should have got out of there it's their own fault!, I'm sorry they lost their lives but they should have got out of there." Sometimes I hate people.

ROGER JAN 10, 2018 03:22 PM

I have heard it was not a required evacuation area so I don't think it's the fault of the victims they were in harms way. But there are always those who blame the victims, and there always will be.

A-1515851988 JAN 10, 2018 03:13 PM

Geez. How insensitive. At this point, we need to look forward instead of judging others for their past decisions. The area will be at risk for flash floods and debris flows for at least two years, the danger does not stop here - it is just beginning. We need to learn from our oversights and trust the officials and scientists when they say "get out" next time. What's done is done, all we can do is USE this experience in the future - do not let the lives lost be for naught, and do not judge. It helps nothing and no one.

OOPS JAN 10, 2018 01:13 PM

heart breaking!!

OCEANDREW JAN 10, 2018 01:32 PM

My thought exactly.

TAGDES JAN 10, 2018 12:33 PM

The coroners office just confirmed the identity of one of those listed above.

A-1515851988 JAN 10, 2018 01:17 PM

The coroner said they "think" they may have ID'd Josie Gower's body.

TAGDES JAN 10, 2018 12:49 PM

It was on KCAL, very public and very sad to watch.

A-1515851988 JAN 10, 2018 12:44 PM

How do you know this? Which one above? I always wonder how people can know for sure if it hasn't been publicly released yet.

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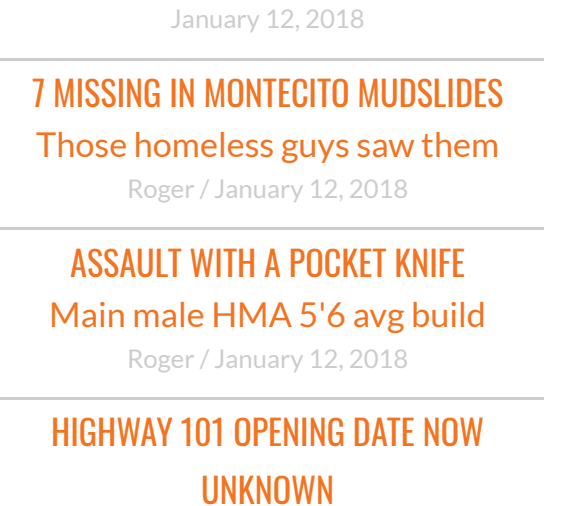

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